

Appendix C: FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY

Hydrology and Soils

This project has been assessed for consistency with the nine ACS objectives. All aspects of this project were found to be consistent in meeting the ACS objectives (see Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives Section). Reducing road density in Tier 1 Key watersheds is consistent with direction found in the standards and guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision (USDA 1994). In order to comply with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and avoid exacerbating the historic impacts from timber harvests and roads, the project was designed, and mitigation measures applied, to avoid potential impacts. All action alternatives would be consistent with the standards and guidelines of the Forest Plan, as amended, related to soils, hydrology and aquatic resources.

Fish

This project has been assessed for consistency with the nine ACS objectives. All aspects of this project were found to be consistent in meeting the ACS objectives (see Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives Section). Reducing road density in Tier 1 Key watersheds is consistent with direction found in the standards and guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision (USDA 1994). In order to comply with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and avoid exacerbating the historic impacts from timber harvests and roads, the project was designed, and mitigation measures applied, to avoid potential impacts. All action alternatives would be consistent with the standards and guidelines of the Forest Plan, as amended, related to fisheries and aquatic resources.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives

The Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) is a primary component of the Forest Plan, as amended (USDA Forest Service 1994) for the protection of aquatic and riparian-dependent species. There are four components of the ACS:

- Riparian Reserves
- Key Watersheds
- Watershed Analysis
- Watershed Restoration

The project area is located within the Suiattle River Tier 1 Key Watershed. The Forest Plan requires that watershed analysis be completed prior to timber harvest (USDA Forest Service 1995), and when possible calls for decommissioning unnecessary roads, especially in densely

roaded watersheds. The preferred alternative does not add new permanent road. Some road decommissioning has already begun in the watershed. Other restoration that has occurred in the watershed includes removing fish barriers and providing passage of 100-year storm events by enlarging culverts and replacing culverts with bridges, as well as treatment of noxious weeds in riparian corridors.

In addition to the four components of the ACS, there are nine objectives that collectively help to assure that the continuation of ecosystem functions which Riparian Reserves serve are protected. Project consistency determinations under the requirements of the National Forest Management Act include a determination of consistency with these nine objectives as described in the Record of Decision for *Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management planning documents within the range of the northern spotted owl* (USDA, USDI 1994) page B-10. In addition, the court in *Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Association et. al v. National Marine Fisheries Service, et. al and American Forest Resource Council*, Civ. No. 04-1299RSM (W.D. Wash) (*PCFFA IV*) ruled that project consistency reviews must include the project or site scale and the watershed scale.

The following is an assessment of the Suiattle ATM project against the nine ACS Objectives.

Objective 1: Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations and communities are uniquely adapted.

- This project will maintain and restore watershed-scale aquatic systems by reducing the effects of roads on streams. This action will reduce the effects of roads on increased stream flows, hydrologic flow patterns, and sediment delivery to streams through the restoration of road and stream-crossings during road obliteration activities.

Objective 2: Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal, and drainage network connections include floodplains, wetlands, upslope areas, headwater tributaries, and intact refugia. These network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.

- This project will maintain and restore hydrologic connectivity within several watersheds. This action restores physical stream flow routes to be unobstructed through the restoration of road and stream-crossings during road obliteration activities. Additionally, the obliteration of roads located in riparian areas will restore hydrologic connectivity between adjacent flood plains and upslope areas.

Objective 3: Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations.

- This project will maintain and restore the physical integrity of aquatic banks and shorelines through the restoration of road and stream-crossings during road obliteration

activities. Streambanks will revegetate quickly ensuring physical integrity of restored stream crossings is maintained.

Objective 4: Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems. Water quality must remain within the range that maintains the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of the system and benefits survival, growth, reproduction, and migration of individuals composing aquatic and riparian communities.

- This project will maintain and restore water quality by reducing the amount of sediment delivered to streams, which has the potential to decrease stream temperatures. Road obliteration activities will restore flow patterns along roads, which will reduce the amount of sediment generated from road surface erosion, as well as the likelihood of road failures due at road-stream crossing blockage.

Objective 5: Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. Elements of the sediment regime include the timing, volume, rate, and character of sediment input, storage, and transport.

- This project will maintain and restore water quality by reducing the volume of sediment delivered to streams and by restoring the sediment distribution to be more natural through reducing the amount of fine sediment that is delivered to streams from roads. Road obliteration activities will restore flow patterns along roads, which will reduce the amount of sediment generated from road surface erosion, as well as the likelihood of road failures at road-stream crossings.

Objective 6: Maintain and restore in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats and to retain patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing. The timing, magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high, and low flows must be protected.

- This project will maintain and restore in-stream flows by reducing the volume of sediment delivered to streams and by restoring streambed characteristics to have less fine sediments that are generated from roads. Road obliteration activities will reduce the effects of roads on increased stream flows, hydrologic flow patterns, and sediment delivery to streams through the restoration of road and stream-crossings during road obliteration activities.

Objective 7: Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.

- This project will maintain and restore the timing, variability and duration of stream bank inundation by restoring hydrologic connectivity in riparian areas. The obliteration of roads located in riparian areas will restore hydrologic connectivity between adjacent

flood plains, wetlands, and upslope areas to reduce the effects of roads on increase peak flows and to restore natural inundation patterns.

Objective 8: Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.

- This project will maintain and restore the composition and diversity of plant communities in riparian areas by restoring hydrologic connectivity at road-stream crossings. Streambanks will be revegetated during road obliteration activities to ensure physical stability of restored stream crossings is maintained and to reestablish a native plant community on disturbed ground.

Objective 9: Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.

- This project will maintain and restore the composition and diversity of plant communities in riparian areas by decompacting and revegetating riparian areas affected by roads. Seeding and mulching will be used during road obliteration activities to ensure establishment of a native plant community on disturbed ground.

Wildlife

All Alternatives would be consistent with the Forest Plan. Habitat, including late-successional forest, grizzly core habitat, wolf security habitat, elk and deer habitat capability, and riparian habitat would be maintained or increased.

Forest Vegetation

All Alternatives would be consistent with the Forest Plan, as amended, for timber management on both Matrix and Late Successional Reserve land allocations.

Botany

The proposed action would be consistent with the Forest Plan, as amended. Although some of the roads would be no longer open to vehicular access in Alternatives B and Alternative B Option 1, we would still be meeting the Management Requirement that states "Avoid spread of weeds during road decommissioning or constructions activities." The Best Management Practices call for treating existing infestations before roads are closed or obliterated, unless the Management Requirement can be met with an alternate method. By adhering to the following, we can still avoid the spread of weeds during road decommissioning:

- Actions conducted or authorized by the Forest Service that will operate outside the limits of the road prism require the cleaning of all heavy equipment prior to entering National Forest system lands.
 - Use weed-free straw and mulch for all projects on National Forest System lands.
 - Inspect active gravel, fill, and stockpiles, quarry sites, and borrow materials for invasive plants before use and transport. Treat or require treatment of infested source before any use of pit material. Use only gravel, fill, sand, and rock this is judged to be weed free by District or Forest weed specialists.
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- If weeds are present in the project area, all equipment and gear should be cleaned before leaving the area to avoid spreading the infestation further.
 - When feasible, work from relatively weed-free areas into the infested area rather than vice-versa.

Recreation

All Alternatives would provide varying degrees of access and, therefore, varying levels of support for meeting Forest Plan goals and objectives for recreation. They would all be consistent with the Forest Plan, as amended.

Recreation – Dispersed, Forest Plan p. 4-84 (1): Provide for a broad spectrum of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) settings and recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, gathering forest products, viewing scenery, camping, hiking, floating, etc. All alternatives provide for a broad spectrum.

Recreation – Trails, Forest Plan p.4-90, 4-91 (7. Trailhead Policy)(b): A trailhead is a place where a trail connects with a road or navigable body of water. Trailheads are part of the transportation system and will be developed and maintained with Forest Roads Program funds. As a minimum, a trailhead will provide adequate parking for an average peak season weekend day's use. All alternatives except no action provide for a trailhead.

Recreation – Wilderness, Forest Plan p.4-101: Wilderness provides unique and highly favored recreational experiences, however, recreational use of wilderness must be closely managed and monitored to assure that degradation of resource values does not occur. All alternatives would provide for managed and monitored use of wilderness.

Visual Quality

The proposed actions would be consistent with Visual Quality Objectives of Foreground and Middleground retention, and those of Recommended Scenic River.

Heritage and Treaty Resources

The Proposed Action with mitigation measures incorporated is consistent with the applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines identified in Appendix F. All sites identified or discovered will be protected from potential impacts from project activities.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

All alternatives would be consistent with the Forest Plan, as amended.

Fire

While the action alternatives would provide varying degrees of access and, therefore, varying levels of support for meeting Forest Plan goals and objectives for fire management Forest lands in the drainage, they are consistent with the Forest Plan standards and guidelines for fire management.

Road Infrastructure

While the action alternatives would provide varying degrees of access and, therefore, varying levels of support for meeting Forest Plan goals and objectives for Forest road infrastructure in the drainage, they are consistent with the Forest Plan standards and guidelines for roads management.

Inventoried Roadless Areas and Unroaded Characteristics

The proposed Suiattle ATM actions are not located within Congressionally designated wilderness or within Inventoried Roadless Areas. Effects on access to Wilderness is described in Recreation.